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TILLEY GRANNAN POTTS CAMPBELL

Good Men With a Good Government and Good Policies Behind Them

A BOYS DEATH

The Tragedy and the Glory of War.

By Harold Begbie

Youth is perhaps the finest as it is certainly the most beautiful thing on earth—youth at its highest and its best.

At its highest and its best youth has such a splendor for middle-age that it appears to be the only inspiration of life. We look upon a youth as we look upon an angel. He does not belong to this troublesome world which has made us cynical, which has enriched us, which is so small and trivial under its cloak of pretentiousness. He is perfectly clean of soul, perfectly strong in body, and he has that expression in his clear eyes which is the glory of innocence. In his beauty his freshness, and his goodness he is unconscious. He is Youth.

Such boys, fresh from our public schools, have gone in their thousands to the battlefields. The earth is filled with their graves. They have perished in great waves. Each year of war flings up a new wave of this beauty and innocence, and every year the war fasts another wave will rise and fall to the shores of death. We who have hated and envied, who have tolerated secret diplomacy, who call the enemy Hun and Boche, who cry at one moment "To hell with Serbia," and at the next drag the great name of God into our screaming leading articles, who sit at home saying how sad it all is, and wondering what the income tax will be next year, we in England, and our like-minded vulgarians in Germany, Reventlow and the rest, we middle-aged men are hurling the youth of Europe into the furnace of death to

settle our quarrels and to get what we have coveted.

Youth at its Best

They have never hated. They have been happy with life in their homes, wanting nothing else. The hutchies where they kept their rabbits are still standing beside the wall of the toolshed; their first hunting-saddle is still in the harness-room; their fishing-rods, cricket-bats, and tennis rackets are still in the old schoolroom. Ask the coachman and the gardener to tell you stories of these boys and you will see those eyes kindle with admiration and affection. Ah, youth at its best—who can help loving it?

There is nothing so beautiful as youth, and I feel that it is not insularity which makes me think English youth to be the finest and most beautiful of all. The young, clean-souled youth of all the world, born of cultured and virtuous parents, bred in the noblest traditions of our race, how near he is to his best to an angel. His valor does not seem to me a great thing; we were all brave at twenty; but his chivalry, his chastity, his modesty, his tenderness, his silence, how heavenly are these things!

The other day there died in France a boy from Claysmore School, who had been loved by all who knew him. He was a boy's hero, a mother's hero, and the pride of his regiment. He had won the Military Cross and the D.S.O. And he died in the flush and rapture of his youth. His mother's letter to the head master, which has been printed in the school magazine, tells the story of his end in language so moving and so beautiful that I wish to give it to a wider public. This boy was in the Rifle Brigade and his colonel said of him, "He was the best company commander by far that I have seen out here. . . . As I said in my recommendation of him for a D. S. O., he was the finest type of fighting officer I have ever seen."

A telegram from the War Office came to this boy's home one day, telling his parents that he was seriously wounded and that they might visit him at Abbeville. The father was unable to go, but an hour after the telegram arrived the mother and another son had started for France. They arrived an hour and a half too late, and yet not too late for such a farewell as will live in their souls for ever. This is what the mother says:—

We saw him in the mortuary looking such a soldier, and the dear forehead was hardly cold when I kissed it. He was covered with the Union Jack and lay in front of the little altar, just the supreme sacrifice. We stayed to the funeral early Thursday, when a Captain Johnson and three privates shared the same service. One other mother was there, who had nursed her boy for some days ere he went, and we three mourners stood in the glorious sunshine, the blue sky piled with grand banks of white clouds, and when the service was over the buglers saluted us and them, and standing between us and the open graves sounded the "Last Post" and the "Reveille" as I have never heard it before and never shall again. It must have rolled beyond the clouds and down the vaults of heaven till I—himself must have heard it. Then we hastened back to England to tell the news we dared not wire.

A Country's Tribute

When you read these few words do you not seem to see in this one mother and this one son the whole human tragedy and also the whole human glory of war? The boy was what he was because of that breast which had fed him, those arms which had held him, that love which had enriched him, inspired him, and consecrated his young soul. And this devotion of the mother has for its end a grave in France. There was the brave parting in England when he went out to fight, and then the last kiss on the dear forehead which was hardly cold. And yet there is no agonized cry of revolt from the mother, no furious imprecations, no bitterness of soul. For the son, death in the glory and beauty of his youth; for the mother, a memory of all he was to her, from infancy to the hour of farewell. "He was covered with the Union Jack and lay in front of the

little altar, just the supreme sacrifice."

So England stoops and kisses the dear foreheads of her youth, covering them with her flag, laying them before the altar of God's judgment, leaving them there as just the supreme sacrifice. She has mothered them from infancy under summer and winter skies, giving them her roses to love, her hedgerows to hunt, her hills to climb, her great winds to make them strong, and her history for a tradition and an inspiration: She wanted them to make her homes happier and kinder, to give to her laws a deeper wisdom and a sweeter charity, to render her name more glorious among the nations of the earth, to impassion human life with something finer and grander than we have had it in our souls to give. But she has been forced to surrender this gracious youth to death, leaving in our hands, which are perhaps not guiltless of blood, the task which should have been theirs. She is bereft of her youth. She hears the "Last Post" sounding for them, and wonders if "Reveille" will sound for us.

Shall it be in vain

His dazzling courage, his piteous pain? Shall our glorious flag that he flung so high Slide down but an inch in the stary sky?

There is only one thing in England more moving than the death of these glorious children. It is the courage of their mothers. And that courage for us who remain should sound an eternal, a restless Reveille in our souls.—London Chronicle.

Berlin, Feb. 22, via Sayville.—Two German submarines which returned to their base on February 20 sank, during the period of their operations 24 steamers, 3 sailing vessels and nine trawlers, says an Overseas News Agency announcement today. "The vessels sunk," adds the announcement, "include a ship of 9,100 tons gross, laden with coal."

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Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand.....

"I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink..... naked, and ye clothed me....."

Then shall they answer him, saying— "Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?or naked, and clothed thee?"

And the King shall answer..... "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me?"

Overseas, in ravaged Belgium, more than 3,000,000 of "the least of these" are hungry, thirsty, thinly clad—looking to us! Have you done what you could for any of them?

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